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FREE ISSUE

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ISSUE NO. 3

Ant-Man and the Wasp

Avengers: Infinity War

TO INFINITY WAR & BEYOND

SUMMER MOVIE PREVUE

SKYSCRAPER – SOLO: A STAR WARS STORY – JURASSIC WORLD: FALLEN KINGDOM & MORE!

Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom

Tom Cruise, Ethan Hunt, Mission: Impossible 6 - Fallout

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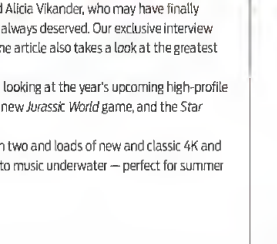
Summer Fun

REMEMBER WHEN SUMMER MOVIES ONLY OPENED IN SUMMER? Historically, summer blockbusters debuted in the last week of May (when the first *Star Wars* movie hit in 1977) but this year we've already seen *Black Panther*, one of the biggest hits Marvel has had yet, as well as *Tomb Raider*, the horror movie *A Quiet Place* and *Pacific Rim: Uprising*, so now we have to see if the real summer releases match up to them.

If you're a Marvel fan, this summer sees the long-awaited unveiling of *The Avengers: Infinity War* and the debut of Thanos, the villain who's been relegated to lurking around in the end credits sequences of the Marvel films up to now, chuckling about all the mayhem he's promising to unleash. Now, he finally gets to unleash it and it will take just about every Marvel superhero currently employed to stop him. That sounds exciting, but we're secretly a little bit more excited about *Deadpool 2* (which also features Josh Brolin, the guy who plays Thanos in *Infinity War*, as Deadpool's nemesis, Cable) and maybe even more excited about *Ant-Man and the Wasp*. Those are two movies that will have a little more license to be weird than the long-awaited and heavily marketed *Infinity War*.

We're also excited about *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* because who doesn't like dinosaurs and exploding volcanoes? The director of *The Impossible*, J. A. Bayona, knows a thing or two about putting natural disasters on-screen, and we feel like he may be the perfect guy to show us the giant dinosaur stampede we've always wanted to see. There's also a virtual stampede of Dwayne Johnson movies out there, starting with *Jumanji*, which kept rolling from Christmas right into early this year, then *Rampage*, featuring CG monsters almost as big as Johnson himself, and *Skyscraper*, which has Johnson proving he can do everything Bruce Willis did in *Die Hard*, but with one leg!



We also have exclusive coverage of *Mission Impossible Fallout* and word from writer-director Christopher McQuarrie and actors Henry Cavill and Simon Pegg.

Maybe the summer's biggest secret will be whether the *Star Wars* juggernaut can keep rolling with *Solo*, a movie that lost its original two directors and was largely reshot by Ron Howard, director of Lucasfilm's *Willow* and *Apollo 13*. One thing we definitely know: There will be some kind of role for Clint Howard, and the Millennium Falcon is going to look as neat as a pin when compared to its hunk of junk appearance in *Episodes IV-VIII*.

The new *Tomb Raider* film is headed to blu-ray and 4K and featured Alicia Vikander, who may have finally earned the legendary video game heroine the big screen respect she's always deserved. Our exclusive interview with Vikander reveals that she's a longtime fan of the game herself. The article also takes a look at the greatest moments in the video game's storied history.

And, of course, summer doesn't just bring new movies: We'll also be looking at the year's upcoming high-profile video game releases and previewing the newest Marvel game titles, a new *Jurassic World* game, and the *Star Wars: Jedi Challenges* R2-D2 AR game.

In addition to all that, we look forward to *Star Trek: Discovery* season two and loads of new and classic 4K and Blu-ray movie and TV titles, and wearable tech that will let you listen to music underwater — perfect for summer pooltime...

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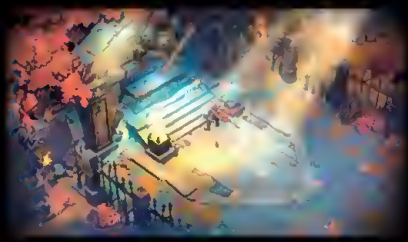

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by Mark A. Altman

Demo Island Discs

THE LATEST IN UHD WON'T LEAVE YOU FEELING BLU.

WANT TO IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS with the greatest sound and picture on Blu-ray? Here are some of the best titles available on 4K that will make them never want to leave your sofa. So pop plenty of popcorn. All these films are for sale now and can play on any Blu-ray or gaming system that is UHD-compatible along with a 4K television monitor. Most discs also feature digital HD downloads that you can add to your Vudu digital storage locker in 4K UHD for streaming.

ALIEN: COVENANT
(20TH CENTURY FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT)
Ridley Scott's latest *Alien* film is a follow-up to *Prometheus* that creates the mythology for the *Alien* saga you never knew you needed or wanted. Featuring a litany of great bonus features, including a compelling Scott commentary and ample deleted scenes, this visually sumptuous film looks stellar in 4K. At home, everyone can hear you scream.

DUNKIRK
CHRISTOPHER NOLAN COLLECTION
(WARNER BROS. HOME VIDEO)
Not only one of the best movies of 2017, Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk* is probably the most impressive 4K Ultra HD release yet, not only boasting stunning image quality and Dolby Atmos audio but a fascinating feature-length making-of documentary about the mounting of this logistically daunting re-creation of the Dunkirk evacuation. A remarkable film and an even more remarkable story, *Dunkirk* is also available in the *Christopher Nolan Collection* box set, featuring many of Nolan's other great films, including *The Dark Knight Trilogy*, which has never looked better. The only notable omission is the mind-bending *Memento*.

BLADE RUNNER: THE FINAL CUT
BLADE RUNNER 2049
(WARNER BROS. HOME VIDEO)
Don't wait 20 years to appreciate these two movie classics. In addition to a beautiful transfer of Ridley Scott's original *Blade Runner*, along with a litany of groundbreaking special features spread across multiple discs, you don't want to miss the brilliant *Blade Runner 2049*. Although light on bonus features, the 4K release of the under-appreciated 2017 sequel features an impeccable transfer along with its potent Dolby Atmos mix. You can also add both to your Vudu digital locker via Movies Anywhere and revel in a dystopian night of cinema at home.

CLOVERFIELD
10 CLOVERFIELD LANE

(PARAMOUNT HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

Who ever thought producer J.J. Abrams could turn the standalone sleeper, *Cloverfield*, into a franchise? But with *10 Cloverfield Lane*, which is a claustrophobic, suspenseful and surprising story in the Hitchcock vein with a *Cloverfield* sci-fi twist, director Dan Trachtenberg manages to top Matt Reeves' surprising original. While the first film is largely comprised of found footage, making its 4K upgrade questionable (although it does boast some great commentary and deleted scenes), *10 Cloverfield Lane* has never looked better and is a welcome addition to Ultra HD.

DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES
RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES

(20TH CENTURY FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

This CGI-laden reinvention of the *Planet of the Apes* saga has become one of the most successful movie trilogies of all time and looks beautiful in ultra HD, with all three films packaged to feature a wide array of fascinating bonus material, including a look into creating the apes through motion capture, deleted scenes and audio commentaries. Now if we could only get the original 1968 *Planet of the Apes* on 4K.

WONDER WOMAN

(WARNER BROS. HOME VIDEO)

Diana Prince is indeed a wonder woman and never more wonderful than in this packed 4K UHD edition of the film that features extensive bonus footage along with a deleted scene cut from the theatrical version. Although the film's coda veers too heavily into superhero CGI mayhem, *Wonder Woman* not only ranks amongst the best superhero films of all time, along with *Superman: The Movie* and *The Dark Knight*, but is also a superb addition to any 4K Ultra HD library.

THE FIFTH ELEMENT

(SONY PICTURES HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

The Fifth Element has been the go-to demo disc for years for both LaserDisc and DVD so you might wonder if the film, currently celebrating its 20th anniversary, still holds up under state-of-the-art scrutiny. The answer is a resounding yes! While the special features aren't the star here, Luc Besson's auteurist sci-fi vision is and this eclectic sci-fi classic is a welcome release on UHD.

LA LA LAND

(LIONSGATE HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

The movie that almost won a Best Picture Oscar last year certainly ranks as one of the great Blu-ray releases of 2017, with an ample array of over three hours of behind-the-scenes material, including a feature on how the filmmakers shut down an L.A. freeway to shoot one of the most memorable music numbers since "Singing in the Rain." This sun-drenched homage to movie musicals looks stunning on 4K and is a must-own.

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY, VOL. 2

(WALT DISNEY/ BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

Writer-director James Gunn brings back his punk rock superhero sensibility to a satisfying summer sequel that marks the entry of Disney into the world of 4K UHD Blu-ray. It's an impressive debut for the studio with a disc that not only looks stunning but has a potent Dolby Atmos mix. And while the disc itself lacks Dolby Vision, a proprietary format for insuring the deepest blacks and most accurate colors, you can stream the film in Dolby Vision on Vudu.

A Whole New (Virtual) World

THE BEST GEAR TO GET YOU INTO VR

By Matt Cabral

2016 MAY HAVE BEEN THE YEAR VIRTUAL REALITY BECAME AVAILABLE to the mainstream consumer, but 2018 marks the year the futuristic-feeling tech has become affordable and accessible enough for the masses to truly embrace it. Toss in a two-year deep library of impressive movies, experiences, games and other VR-enabled content, and the time's never been better to get your passport stamped in the virtual world.

PLAYSTATION VR

PlayStation 4 owners looking to dive into the latest game-changing content will want to don the PSVR headset for experiences far beyond the gamepad. A variety of starter bundles – tailored to specific preferences – include different combinations of the PSVR headset, Move motion peripherals, PlayStation camera and cool content to get lost in, such as *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim VR* and *DOOM VFR*. Defining experiences, like *Moss* and *Farpoint*, further fill out the PSVR library, ensuring you may never want to return to the real world.

HTC VIVE VR SYSTEM WITH FALLOUT 4 VR

Bring your favorite fictional worlds – from high fantasy to science fiction – to life in the comfort of your home with this immersion-cranking, cutting-edge virtual reality system. Bundled with headset, wireless controllers and a copy of *Fallout 4 VR*, this universe-expanding package invites brave travelers to survive the post-apocalypse right out of the box.

GOOGLE DAYDREAM VIEW

If you're interested in virtual reality, but don't have a VR-ready PC or laptop, the Google Daydream View is a great way to cautiously dip your toes into the tech. When paired with a compatible smartphone, the Daydream View offers a compact VR alternative that still packs plenty of transformative features, from turning Netflix into your personal cinema to bringing fantastical worlds to life all around you.

OCULUS + RIFT TOUCH VIRTUAL REALITY SYSTEM

Immersive, intuitive and inviting to virtual reality rookies and seasoned digital travelers alike, this set includes the powerful Rift headset and Oculus Touch controllers. Whether you want to be enveloped in a favorite film or transported to a fictional gaming universe, this VR-ratcheting hardware bundle has got your back.

SONY PLAYSTATION 4 GOLD WIRELESS STEREO HEADSET

Sony's latest PlayStation headset packs all the features fans have come to expect from the acclaimed line of ear-pleasing peripherals, from stunning 7.1 virtual surround sound to wireless convenience. The Gold edition ups the ante, however, by being specifically designed with PSVR players in mind. Specially crafted to fit over the headset, these ear cans emphasize comfort without sacrificing sound quality.

PLAYSTATION VR AIM CONTROLLER

You're welcome to experience PlayStation VR shooters from behind traditional controls, but those looking to up the trigger-pulling immersion will want to consider adding the Aim peripheral to their virtual reality arsenal. Whether reducing zombies to piles of pulp in *Arizona Sunshine* or blasting alien arachnids in *Farpoint*, fragging just feels better when shouldering the Aim.

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SONY NW-WS413LM BLUE WATERPROOF SPORTS WEARABLE MP3 PLAYER

Everyone listens to music on their headphones at the gym, but you won't really be cool until you can listen to your tunes swimming laps or just plain exploring underwater with this Sony waterproof, wearable MP3 player. In three minutes you can charge up for an hour of playback time and drag and drop your favorite songs (from iTunes for Mac or Windows) into this 4GB hard drive and then enjoy a full hour of swim time in salt-water or freshwater up to six feet deep. With a longer charge time you can use this player up to 12 hours at a time. Plays MP3, WMA, AAC and Linear PCM audio files.

IFIT VUE FITNESS ACTIVITY TRACKER

If you're looking for a fitness tracker that doesn't look like a giant watch, this sleek wearable that comes in a variety of colors and features an elegant design, a bright OLED display and touchscreen technology that allows you to check out your stats for steps, distance and calories with just one touch. It can gently nudge you into action with a subtle vibration and lets you track your fitness milestones without too much flashy bling.

GO PUCK 3X MOBILE POWER DEVICE

You'll never suffer the embarrassment of having your portable or wearable gadgets run out of battery life again as long as you can handle one more gadget: this GO PUCK Mobile Power Device. It's an ultra lightweight charger with enough power to charge up small phones like iPhone 4s about three times. Mountable and wearable, the GO PUCK features dual USB output, standard and rapid charging up to 2A, 4 LED state-of-charge indicators and a rugged, shock- and vibration-resistant design.

GARMIN ETREX 2DX HANDHELD GPS

If you're dying to understand exactly where you are without surrounding yourself with an entire car, this handheld GPS system is the answer to most of your problems. An upgraded version of the popular eTrex 20, the 20x boasts enhanced screen resolution to make your display that much more readable and internal memory so you can store more maps. Rugged and waterproof, the eTrex 20x has auto mount capability and City Navigator NT maps for turn-by-turn driving directions and also mounts easily to your bike, ATV, boat, car or hot air balloon as the situation demands.

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Microsoft

2018 SUMMER MOVIE PREVUE

BY THE EDITORS OF *GEEK*

SUMMER BRINGS SO MANY GOOD things from ice-cream to fireworks to pool parties and lazy days at the beach. But perhaps no summer ritual is embraced more than summer movies at the bijou — big, bombastic and, if you're lucky, wildly entertaining. To help you get ready for the onslaught of summer's greatest geeky movies, ***Geek*** is excited to bring you our annual preview of the films that will make us go "ooooh!" and not "eh?"

AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR

RELEASE DATE: April 27

DIRECTOR: The Russo Brothers

STORY: The Avengers assemble to battle Thanos, who wants to get his mitts on the last of the Infinity Stones.

SURE PUTS A SMILE ON OUR FACE: Marvel has been on a roll since the first *Iron Man* and the groundbreaking Marvel team-up that was the first *Avengers*, which is still one of the most enjoyable of all the Marvel films to date. But with *Avengers: Age of Ultron* not quite matching the heights of the first film and *Black Panther* earning some of the best reviews and box office of any Marvel outing ever released, the pressure is on for *Infinity War* to deliver on plot threads that have been seeded through everything from *Captain America: Civil War* and the *Guardians of the Galaxy* movies to *Doctor Strange*. It all may rest on the hulking shoulders of uber-villain Thanos and Josh Brolin, who provides the character's motion capture performance and voice and will also be featured as Cable in *Deadpool 2*. The CG rendering of Thanos, one of Marvel's signature bad guys, has to do better than *Justice League*'s soulless Steppenwolf or *Wonder Woman*'s helmeted Ares, two characters who dragged down rather than elevated the movies around them. And *Infinity War* also needs to offer up more than our heroes' digital stunt doubles fighting hordes of CGI monsters, something both *Age of Ultron* and *Justice League* have already shown us. The good news is that Marvel hasn't had an all-out movie stumble in years, with even oddball underdogs like *Ant-Man*, *Doctor Strange* and *Thor Ragnarok* proving themselves surprisingly enjoyable efforts. So if Marvel can't hit a home run with this years-in-the-works epic, something's surely wrong in the bullpen.

INFINITE RESEARCH

BONE UP ON THESE MARVEL TALES TO GET READY FOR *INFINITY WAR*

IRON MAN

BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Jon Favreau's near-perfect helming of the beloved but B-level Tony Stark was supercharged by a terrific Robert Downey, Jr. performance that helped launch the MCU with a bang.

THE INCREDIBLE HULK

UNIVERSAL

Remember Edward Norton as Bruce Banner? The second attempt at a Hulk movie after Ang Lee's ambitious, arty misfire got some of the Marvel action and characterization right but ended with a murky CG monster battle.

IRON MAN 2

BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Iron Man faced off against a Russian foe in this sequel that seemed to start limiting the character's interactions strictly to the 1%. Major bonus points for introducing ScarJo's Black Widow.

THOR

BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT

It's amazing anyone could make a movie out of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's classic *Thor* comics, but Chris Hemsworth manages to hold the first one together through sheer charisma.

CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE FIRST AVENGER

BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Chris Evans' earnest charm raises this WWII period piece a cut above predecessors like *The Rocketeer* and truly lays the groundwork for *The Avengers*.

ANT-MAN AND THE WASP

RELEASE DATE: July 6
DIRECTOR: Peyton Reed
STORY: Scott Lang prepares to get small again.
INSECTICIDE: Paul Rudd's Scott Lang and a nimble directing job by Peyton Reed easily dug the first *Ant-Man* out of the creative pit left by the departure of original director Edgar Wright. This time, Lang takes on champing-at-the-bit partner The Wasp (Evangeline Lilly) to leap back into miniaturized action with additional star power provided by Michelle Pfeiffer, Laurence Fishburne and returning mentor Michael Douglas. Rudd's Ant-Man cameo in *Captain America: Civil War* provided the MCU with one of its most hilarious sequences, so this sequel has a higher bar to clear than the original movie.

DEADPOOL 2

RELEASE DATE: May 18
DIRECTOR: David Leitch
STORY: The wisecracking Wade Wilson (Ryan Reynolds) is back to rip and quip his way through another *Deadpool* adventure.
POLL PARTY: *Deadpool* was one of the most pleasant movie surprises of 2016, but this time the stakes are higher as the subversive character marks the summer as his cinematic release turf. With a hysterical teaser trailer, can his R-rated raunch and humor still feel fresh the second time? With awesome *Atomic Blonde* and *John Wick* helmer Leitch behind the camera, we think it will.

SOLO: A STAR WARS STORY

RELEASE DATE: May 25
DIRECTOR: Ron Howard
STORY: The galaxy discovers the origin of Han Solo: rogue, pirate, smuggler, scoundrel. You'd like him.
FLYING SOLO: *Rogue One*, despite all its turmoil, proved to be one of the most artistically successful of the new era *Star Wars* films. Can Solo, under reliable (*Willow* excepted) journeyman helmer Ron Howard, be the same after previous directors Lord & Miller were unceremoniously dispatched to the phantom zone — sorry, we're mixing our metaphors here — months into filming? We hope (and expect) so. But, of course, the biggest mystery is really about whether Chewie will make it home in time for Life Day.

OCEAN'S 8

RELEASE DATE: June 8
DIRECTOR: Gary Ross
STORY: Danny Ocean's wayward sister, played by Sandra Bullock, shows that thievery runs in the family.
GIRL POWER: Although the conceit of having Bullock as George Clooney's sister reeks of a contrived *Supergirl* gimmick (remember Helen Slater looking up at the poster of Superman, her cousin, when Christopher Reeve isn't even in the movie? You probably don't), the idea of an all-female heist is fantastic and should inject the franchise — which went two movies too long — with new life by featuring a terrific ensemble of some of today's most talented actresses, including Anne Hathaway, Katie Holmes, Olivia Munn, Cate Blanchett, Mindy Kaling, Rihanna and James Corden. Wait, what, James Corden?

THE INCREDIBLES 2

RELEASE DATE: June 15
DIRECTOR: Brad Bird
STORY: The superhero family without capes returns.
BIG BIRD: After *Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol*, Brad Bird seemed like the feature director of the moment, but *Tomorrowland* has sent him back to his roots as an animation director (his dream project *1906*, about the catastrophic San Francisco earthquake, notwithstanding). That's all good because people have been clamoring for a sequel to *The Incredibles* — one of the greatest superhero movies ever made, animated or otherwise — for years. Catherine Keener and Bob Odenkirk, presumably playing villains, join the cast.

THE FIRST PURGE

RELEASE DATE: July 4
DIRECTOR: Gerard McMurray
STORY: The whole *Purge* thing apparently started on an Island somewhere.
URGE TO PURGE: Ever wonder where all this purgin' began? Well, you could look back to the old *Star Trek* episode "Return of the Archons" ("Festival! Festival!") but this prequel will reportedly clue us in on how the idea of decriminalizing all illegal acts for one palate-cleansing day a year began. One thing's for sure: While Facebook may get too political, it's refreshing to see a horror movie franchise be this subversive.

INFINITE RESEARCH

THE AVENGERS
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
Marvel's first epic team-up remains one of the most enjoyable, thanks to Joss Whedon's clever dialogue and some priceless character interaction between Tony Stark and his teammates, including new Bruce Banner Mark Ruffalo and Tom Hiddleston's lovable Loki.

IRON MAN 3
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
Writer-director Shane Black takes this sequel off into some unexpected directions, but this time Tony Stark seems to hide out and send his remote control suit out to do most of the fighting.

THOR: THE DARK WORLD
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
Thor goes up against some Dark Elves in a movie that starts opening up the Marvel universe to outer other worlds, laying groundwork for *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE WINTER SOLDIER
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
The Russo Brothers bring an edgy, suspenseful vibe to this smash that shows Chris Evans' Steve Rogers becoming one of the most surprisingly compelling characters in the MCU.

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
James Gunn brought a terrifically irreverent heist movie vibe to this space extravaganza that became so popular it wound up heavily influencing later Marvel movies.

AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
The much-anticipated *Avengers* sequel features some iconic moments (particularly involving Paul Bettany's god-like android Vision) but eventually gets swamped by armies of fighting CG characters.

2018 SUMMER MOVIE PREVUE

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 3: SUMMER VACATION

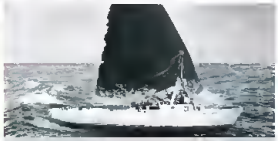
RELEASE DATE: July 13
DIRECTOR: Genndy Tartakovsky
STORY: Dracula boards the Love Boat.
BLACK & DEKKER: This is the third in the series of surprisingly successful takes on the Universal movie monsters from director Tartakovsky, the man behind Cartoon Network hits *Dexter's Laboratory* and *Samurai Jack*. *Tartakovsky's* eye-popping visual style and offbeat humor make a smooth transition from 2D cel animation to 3D computer animation, and the voice cast of Adam Sandler, Andy Samberg, Molly Shannon, Mel Brooks and Steve Buscemi doesn't hurt either.

MI6: FALLOUT

RELEASE DATE: July 27
DIRECTOR: Christopher McQuarrie
STORY: Writer-director Christopher McQuarrie is back (unfortunately, *MI:5* composer Joe Kraemer isn't) and so is Rebecca Ferguson as Ilsa Faust in the latest installment of this venerable franchise.
YOUR MISSION IF YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT: Tom Cruise has worked wonders keeping the *M:I* missions fresh, and we expect the latest installment to have the same incredible stunts, action, espionage and fun as the last few films, which have only gotten better after the early De Palma and John Woo misfires. Ever since J.J. Abrams' *Mission: Impossible III*, the franchise has really lit the fuse and McQuarrie seems made to make these films.

THE EQUALIZER 2

RELEASE DATE: August 10
DIRECTOR: Antoine Fuqua
STORY: Denzel Washington is up for more equalizing.
CALL MY AGENT: Having Antoine Fuqua direct Denzel Washington in an update of a mostly forgotten 1980s TV show might have sounded like a crazy idea four years ago, but Fuqua's *The Equalizer* earned enough bank and good reviews to dig Washington's agent, Robert McCall, out of retirement one more time, giving Fuqua and Washington their first opportunity to make a sequel.



THE MEG

RELEASE DATE: August 10
DIRECTOR: Jon Turteltaub
STORY: Prehistoric *Jaws*.
BLACK & DEKKER: It's too bad director Jon Turteltaub (*National Treasure*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*) couldn't bring frequent collaborator Nicolas Cage onboard this production, as Cage vs. a prehistoric shark sounds like the perfect summer movie. Based on a series of popular novels, this thriller has action star Jason Statham, uber nerd Rainn Wilson and Ruby Rose (as a woman with the action-figure-ready name Jaxx Herd) facing down a shark the size of a couple of semi trucks. We're actually embarrassingly excited about this one.

INFINITE RESEARCH

ANT-MAN
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
This low-key surprise features a charming, funny turn by Paul Rudd as Scott Lang, heir to the shrinkifying hardware of original *Ant-Man* Hank Pym (Michael Douglas).

CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
You'd never guess a bunch of guys fighting on an airport tarmac would be so thrilling but by the time a John Romita-style Spider-Man shows up and Ant-Man starts growing instead of shrinking you have the makings of one of the all-time great action sequences.

DOCTOR STRANGE
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
Another improbable Marvel success story, this hallucinogenic fantasy puts Steve Ditko's florid master sorcerer on the big screen in the form of a highly convincing Benedict Cumberbatch.

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
James Gunn continues his unexpectedly touching team with a star turn by a digitally rejuvenated Kurt Russell as Ego, the Living Planet.

SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
Marvel shakes up the *Spider-Man* formula with Tom Holland as a younger, inexperienced Peter Parker wearing a high-tech Spidey suit provided to him by Tony Stark. Michael Keaton's Vulture turns in one of the greatest confrontation scenes in the MCU — and it's just him and Holland talking in a car!

THOR: RAGNAROK
BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT
Thor seems to take a detour into a highly Jack Kirby-influenced corner of the *Guardian of the Galaxy*'s outer space turf in this enjoyable sequel that again turns on Chris Hemsworth's charm and some dazzling visuals.

Sea of Thieves

WITH Chips Ahoy!

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XBOX ONE Windows 10

by Edward Gross

RETURN TO JURASSIC WORLD... ONE LAST TIME

WHETHER YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT *Jurassic Park* or *Jurassic World*, there seems to be a pretty standard formula to these films: People go to an island and those who aren't eaten by dinosaurs get off the island. Admittedly a pretty slim-sounding premise, but when you consider that the first four films in the series have pulled in nearly $4 billion at the box office, slim ain't so shabby. Though it does make you worry ever so slightly that they may screw the whole thing up by getting a little deeper with this summer's *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*.

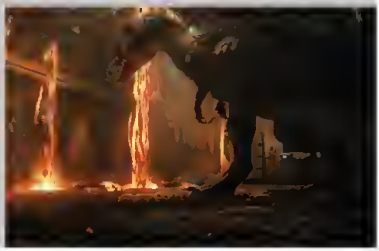
The film is actually designed as the second part of a trilogy rather than one of those blockbusters that is retconned in response to box office success (*Pirates of the Caribbean* immediately comes to mind). To this end, it's promising to be the darkest segment in the series. "Normally, the second chapter is where everything somehow gets more and more complicated and more tangled," notes J.A. Bayona, who assumes the director's chair from Colin Trevorrow, who in turn will be back for the third film. "In that sense, it's very exciting, because you are somehow picking up the consequences of the first movie and planting the seeds for the vigorous final chapter, which would be the third movie."

"The idea of a trilogy was always there," comments producer Frank Marshall, "and because [co-writers] Colin and Derek Connolly

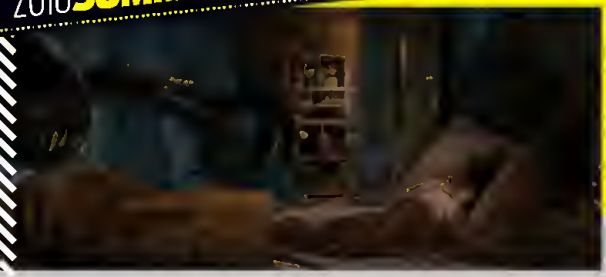
have always planned for three movies, there is a thread that goes through them. Things are not wrapped up in this film; it doesn't have a definitive ending. It hopefully makes you want to know what's going to happen next, but it is satisfying as a movie in itself. We do take a left turn in the middle. I can tell you that." Naturally, he gives no indication of where that left turn leads.

For Bayonna (*The Orphanage*, *The Impossible*), fueling him creatively is the fact that he's entering a cinematic world with a rich background filled with characters, stories, locations and a connection with the audience that makes it all the more emotional.

"What convinced me the most to do this film," he says, "is the fact that this story is not a rescue mission to save people from dinosaurs, but it's a rescue mission to save dinosaurs. From the very beginning, we had this idea of a volcano threatening the life of all the remaining dinosaurs on Earth. And it's about Claire Dearing [Bryce Dallas Howard], who has made a big step forward in comparison of who she was in the first movie, who goes back to Owen Grady [Chris Pratt] to try and convince him to go back to the island. And there's a second half in the movie, after delivering what everyone is expecting from a Jurassic movie, that takes you to a very unexpected place, which I found very interesting and very comfortable."



Though, like Marshall, he's



not comfortable enough to share what that unexpected place is. Which, in itself, isn't unexpected at all. Pratt, on the other hand, teases a bit more than that: "We needed to move on. We needed to expand, and that's what we're doing in this film. Because it was designed as a trilogy, this is the connective tissue between Jurassic World on the island and Jurassic World in the world. It's Pandora's Box opening and that's what's happening in this movie. We're literally blowing up the island so we can't go back to it. That's a part of a very cherished Jurassic past and now it's bigger. It's global. We're talking about the expansion of science and what that deals with and how we deal with it as human beings. We can't put the genie back in the bottle now. These things are going to be all over the place and the question is: How is that going to be different?"

Exploring that difference intrigued Bayona, who wanted to tap into the relationship between humanity and nature through science. "These movies play as a metaphor of where the world is right now," he points out. "Like I said, this second episode gets more complicated and we live in a complicated world right now. I think it's very interesting what is going on in the movie after the disaster in the park. Everything is talking about what is going to happen with these dinosaurs because of the volcano. And everyone is talking about what is the responsibility of man toward these creations. Somehow that triggers a context that you can understand as a reflection of the world we live in."

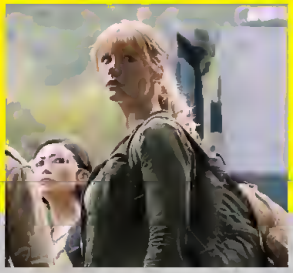
One of the "relationships" of the last film was the one between Owen and the velociraptors he raised, most notably "Blue" (think about how cool that moment was in *Jurassic World* where Owen was riding a motorcycle, his raptors running beside him). That particular duo will continue to be explored in this one — which ties into the overall themes of the film. Muses Bayona, "Talking about the relationship of man toward the creatures that he has created, it makes sense to have a story where you develop the relationship Owen has with Blue. Owen has been raising these dinosaurs since they were babies, and he's been taking care and training her. Now Blue is the last of her kind, the last of the velociraptors and her life is threatened by this volcano. And Owen needs to take responsibility, which is what I believe the movie is talking about."

"The *Jurassic* movies," Pratt says, "have been man marveling at the spectacle of these giant creatures or man running in fear and hiding and, you know, trying not to get eaten. So it's either fear or wonder. But the relationship between Owen and Blue is a different kind of relationship. It's based on trust and respect and love. Owen raised this animal since she was hatched, and so it's just a different kind of relationship. It's more of a parent to a child or master-to-subject type of relationship. He feels a lot of love for her. And I think he's conflicted about his responsibility for the events of the first movie. He saw some pretty bad stuff then and also before. His M.O. is to sort of just run away from it and ignore the things that have happened in the past; he doesn't think you can do anything to change it, so it's best to ignore it. Through the course of this movie he has to learn that he has a responsibility there and he should do his best to take care of those relationships that are close to his heart."

One of them, of course, being that with Claire Dearing (Bryce Dallas Howard), which, from the end of the first *Jurassic World*, looked like it was moving to a more intimate level. Apparently things have not gone as smoothly as one would have thought.

Bayona explains, "One of the things I loved about the first *Jurassic World* was their relationship. The chemistry between Chris and Bryce is amazing, and it's such a joy to be with them on set. We knew we had to go back to these characters and try to take the relationship one step forward. I think we will find them in a more mature place in this one. It's very unexpected, the first time you see them, because they're not together anymore, and it's Claire who somehow feels guilty for what happened in the first movie, who's leading a dinosaur protection group that is fighting for the rights of these animals. She's the one going back to Owen, trying to convince him to go back to the island, and from the moment you find them together again, it's the same chemistry."

"We're picking up the story a few years after the events of the first film," Pratt elaborates, "and with Claire and Owen, so much of what's happened between them is unspoken, but hopefully audiences will understand what they've gone through, and

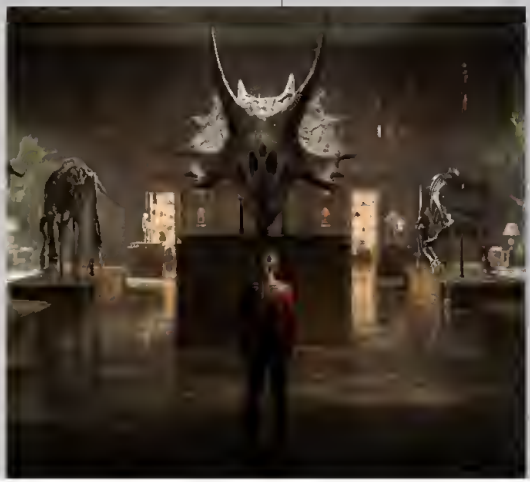


everything that happened in *Jurassic World* were pretty traumatic experiences. And they've each handled them differently. For Claire, she's focused on how she can make it better, how she can live with herself based on the guilt for the lives that were lost. That's something she focuses on every day. My character believes there is no way to make yourself feel better. There's nothing you can do and you have to move on and live your life. We allude to the idea that what broke them up is she couldn't move on. She couldn't get past it and in that way that can be a flaw. But with Owen, to just simply ignore what they went through is also a flaw. So they need one another. She needs him to be able to fulfill her wish of making some effort to make this better, and he needs to realize that he can't go through life doing nothing."

Howard reflects on Claire's journey between films: "What we saw in the first film," she details, "was a woman whose actions were out of alignment with her values. It's not that she was a bad person or a devious, money-hungry person. It's just that she was a C-level executive who started making decisions that prioritized the bottom line over her own values, turning a blind eye to that. Then we saw someone reconnect with who they truly are, and, without getting too philosophical about this — above all else, it's a fun movie — she's someone basically becoming herself and becoming empowered. Outrunning a T-Rex in high-heeled shoes... That's the fullest expression of Claire's truest self.

"So where we're at at this stage," she continues, "is she's got all of the same personality quirks she had. We are who we are. But she's back to who she's always been; somebody who has realized that these animals have rights and feels a sense of duty and responsibility and a sense of guilt. She feels it's her responsibility to ensure the safety of these animals, and so that's the person that we meet at the beginning. What I was really glad about is that she could still be right and entertaining. Sometimes you play a character and the only way for that character to be entertaining is if they're wrong. So there's a sense of righteousness, but it's still entertaining to watch."

Emphasizes Pratt, "That relationship between them is really important and, again, central to the story. The Jurassic movies have always been movies about science and imagination, merging with thrillers as dinosaurs chase people around. But at the core of it, they're movies about people and the relationships those people have with one another, and the relationships those people have with nature. All of that is explored further."



That sounds great, but even more than that, Marshall, who's been a producer since 1975's *At Long Last Love*, has come to realize with *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* just how much the movie business has changed over the years, particularly when it comes to the idea that a series of sequels have now morphed into the franchise.

"It's a whole new world," he laughs. "I mean, it's not just the movie. It's the books, it's the toys, it's the live shows, it's the Legos. It's what car are you going to sell? There's this huge, massive franchise now that circles around. The movie's the anchor, but the amount of work that we're doing outside the movie now, for me, is bigger than any movie I've done. It's exciting in a way that I hope it generates interest in the movie, but there's a point where you've got to go, 'OK, I've had enough of approving the colors of the toys!'"

Look for *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* the film in theaters on June 22, and *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* the books, the toys, the live shows and everything else shortly before or after.

by Edward Gross

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE – FALLOUT

WHAT'S THE FALLOUT FROM *Mission: Impossible 6*, besides actor Tom Cruise very publicly breaking his ankle during a rooftop-leaping stunt? *M:I6 – Fallout* concerns itself with an IMF mission gone wrong, resulting in Ethan Hunt's loyalty being questioned and finding himself on the run from the CIA. Added into the mix is Henry Cavill as August Walker, an agent determined to take him in. Returnees from the franchise include Rebecca Ferguson as Ilsa Faust, Ving Rhames as Luther Stickell, Michelle Monaghan as Julia Meade-Hunt and Alec Baldwin as Secretary Alan Hunley.

"Ethan has deep regrets about choices he's made in his life," explains McQuarrie. "At the start of the film, he's forced to make a terrible choice and the ensuing events are the consequences of that choice." To make matters worse, Ethan's mission places him in direct conflict with Ilsa Faust,

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE – FALLOUT
RELEASE DATE: July 27
DIRECTOR: Christopher McQuarrie

despite his believing that she had left the spy game entirely. On the home front, IMF Secretary Alan Hunley and Ethan find themselves pitted against the new CIA Director, Erika Sloan [Angela Bassett] and her number one man in the field, Walker. There is deep distrust between the IMF and CIA, each disapproving of the other's methods. Ethan is forced to work with Walker despite their differences and the friction leads to further conflict."

For Pegg, an intriguing aspect of this film — and the last couple of films in the series — is that there is a sense of this becoming an ongoing saga as opposed to separate adventures a la James Bond: "There were elements of the storyline that were set up in the third film that carried forward into Four and, particularly, the Five and Six setup is very much like two parts of a story. *Fallout* has been something of a continuation of that story and, as the title suggests, the fallout of all of Ethan's do-gooding. As to Benji, it's just been about him growing as a character and going from being this IT office lab nerd to a fully functional agent in the field."

One of the strengths of the *Mission: Impossible* films has been the fact that, until now, each installment has had a different director bringing a unique style to the proceedings, which raises the question of whether McQuarrie will be able to do the same with his return engagement. "We were already talking about this film in the last weeks of *Rogue Nation* — a story concept occurred to us which would eventually turn into the central plot of the movie," McQuarrie says. "I had no intention of coming back for a second film, simply because this franchise is known for having a different director every time. I was just spitballing. But Tom loved

the idea and one conversation turned into several and here we are. But making it feel different was a condition of my returning. It was essential to me that the movie have a different feel to maintain the *Mission* aesthetic. I cleaned house, brought in a whole new crew, with the exception of a few key people. I also studied *Rogue Nation* as if it were a template, then worked to smash that template."

Pegg looks to *Ghost Protocol* as the start of why the films are connecting with audiences the way that they do. "They happened upon the notion when we did the fourth one and Tom did that crazy stunt on the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, the people really appreciated the authenticity of what's going on. In an age where you can literally do anything with CG, and not to decry CG in any way — I think it's a spectacularly effective tool — but sometimes the jeopardy involved in watching somebody hang off a building can be diminished if you can see plainly that it's either not them or it's been done on a green-screen. Whereas if the stunts are absolutely real, it just makes the whole experience more edge-of-the-seat and nail-biting because you're watching it thinking, 'Oh, my God, Ethan is hanging off a helicopter,' while you're also thinking, 'Oh, my God, Tom Cruise is hanging off a helicopter.'

For his part, McQuarrie sees the appeal of the films much more simply: "It's Tom Cruise's insistence that the franchise rely on character," he notes. "As much as *Mission* is dominated by stunts and spectacle and exotic locations, it's ultimately about character. We are looking for ways to infuse every moment with it. And, of course, there's Tom's willingness to do things no other actor would. It allows us to create a far more subjective experience."

HENRY CAVILL TAKES ON TOM CRUISE

STRAIGHT FROM A KRYPTONIAN resurrection in *Justice League*, Henry Cavill has turned his sights to Tom Cruise's Ethan Hunt in *Mission: Impossible: - Fallout*, playing agent August Walker, assigned to take him in. "Walker is a blunt force-trauma style weapon," Cavill says. "He's used as a preemptive strike or last resort by the CIA. He's Ordell Robbie's AK-47, so is obviously not going to get along with Ethan Hunt's scalpel-esque, no collateral damage approach. His journey is fittingly simply: The Mission and the greater good at all costs."

With the accompanying high-octane action. "What's unique about the action in every *MI* movie?" he asks rhetorically. "It ups the ante. We do things in this movie that have never been done before on screen. The things that Tom and I went through were both extremely exciting and excitingly dangerous. There was some discomfort, too, I have to say. Tom is fascinating to watch and interact with on set. His mind is constantly living in both performance and producing, even in the middle of takes. It clearly makes for a better movie, but is an incredibly difficult space to exist within for a performer or producer, in my opinion. It's a space, however, that Tom seemingly exists within effortlessly.

Cavill is effusive regarding writer/director Christopher McQuarrie and what he's brought to the film. "He's a very talented director and, dare

I say, my favorite so far," offers Cavill. "He encourages collaboration, he writes exceptionally well and without arrogance; he knows what he wants and is open to discussion of that at any time of day or not and, on top of that all, he is a lovely man. It's story first for McQ, and his style is adaptive."

He does however add the surprising way he ended up cast in the film: "Chris and I, while having conversations privately, also started to have discussions very publicly on Instagram. That's the first time I've been asked to be in a blockbuster movie on social media. Maybe not the last, though?"—EG

by Edward Gross

DWAYNE JOHNSON IS BACK TO BACK WITH RAMPAGE & SKYSCRAPER

DWAYNE JOHNSON HAS PROVEN HIMSELF to be a genuine man for all seasons. Last Christmas, he shocked pretty much everyone with the success of *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, while April sees him starring in *Rampage*, based on the video game of the same name. Then, July will herald the release of *Skyscraper*, which promises to be a unique action film that offers the actor some of his greatest challenges to date. Producer Beau Flynn, a frequent collaborator of Johnson's, compares and contrasts the two films on their way to theaters, noting that they will give fans two very different experiences.

"Of all of Dwayne's movies, *Rampage* and *Skyscraper* are on opposite poles," he explains. "They are wildly different movies. With *Rampage*, we set out to make a Marvel-type monster movie, teaming Dwayne with a gorilla he saved from poachers when the gorilla was a baby. Dwayne plays a primatologist and raised this gorilla, which gets infected, starts to mutate and turns into a monster. What's unique here is Dwayne's character is trying to actually save the gorilla -- save the monster -- versus killing it. This is about him wanting to save his friend, and with that we wanted to make a daytime movie. A big, colorful, poppy daytime movie, not dissimilar to what *Avengers* had done so wonderfully. A lot of monster movies take place at night, they're shadowed and dark, and we really wanted to lean in and own it at daytime, which is very challenging just from a production and visual effects point of view, because you have nowhere to hide. And there are massive set pieces. He partners up with Naomi Harris and they have a very cool, very dynamic relationship. It's not a love story, it's about two people who need each other.

"*Skyscraper* is on the other side of the spectrum," Flynn continues. "It's the most dramatic movie Dwayne has done -- at least the most dramatic kind of action movie, for sure. It's very much driven by his quest to try and save his family, who are trapped in a 240-story building, part of which is on fire, in Hong Kong." This is complicated by a couple of things, one of them being he's a former FBI agent framed and on the run, and this building is completely automated and, therefore, no one is coming in to provide a rescue. Says Flynn, "He has no one to call, no one who can help him. He's basically alone there, and the whole movie takes place at night. And what makes the character so unique for Dwayne is that he's an amputee, his leg from the knee down [is missing]. It's the first time there's been an amputee lead character in a studio action movie as well, which is something we're really proud of. We spent a lot of time with wounded warriors and amputees. These are extraordinary people who have never been celebrated in movies before. Not like this. And this guy has to overcome his limitations as an amputee, ultimately realizing that he has none and, as a human being, no matter what cards you've been dealt, we ultimately have no limitations. That's an exciting theme."

The film's premise regarding the building ties into Flynn's own fascination with the need for things to continually be bigger, and the arrogance and ego that go hand-in-hand with that sort of thinking.

"It's not dissimilar to the *Titanic*," he muses. "In terms of having to build the biggest ship, and for what? And then if, God forbid, something goes wrong, what happens? And the same thing with this building. It's supposed to be an A.I. building. It's supposed to be completely designed to not have anything that can go wrong, but something does go wrong."

Skyscraper reaches theaters on July 13.

RAMPAGE

RELEASE DATE: April 20
DIRECTOR: Brad Peyton
STORY: The Rock handles giant apes, wolves and crocs.

SKYSCRAPER

RELEASE DATE: July 13
DIRECTOR: Rawson Marshall Thurber
STORY: Die Hard in a building.

By STEVEN MELCHING

REBELS LIST

STAR WARS REBELS STORY EDITOR AND SCRIBE ON HIS FAVORITE *REBELS* MOMENTS

A LONG TIME AGO (1977), in a theater far, far away (Honolulu, Hawaii), I saw a movie that would change countless lives, including mine: *Star Wars*. As a lifelong fan, I was thrilled to write for *The Clone Wars* and *Rebels*. I couldn't be prouder of the work our team has done under the leadership of Clone Wars director Dave Filoni, and as *Rebels* concludes I was asked to list my favorite episodes, so here they are....

"Spark of Rebellion"

S1E1: "Spark" establishes a fun, breezy tone that harkens back to the 1977 film and introduces all the elements we expect to see in *Star Wars*: a young person destined for great things, a Jedi mentor, an ace pilot, an alien bruiser, a cool ship, a cranky droid, a Mandalorian and the Empire at its zenith.

"Fire Across the Galaxy"

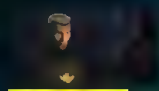
S1E15: While most of season 1 focused on lighter stories, the stakes rise significantly as Kanan Jarrus engages the Grand Inquisitor in a deadly lightsaber duel, Darth Vader is tasked with dealing with the emerging rebel threat, and his former Jedi apprentice, Ahsoka Tano, is revealed to be an agent of the Rebellion.

"The Siege of Lothal"

S2E1: Darth Vader relentlessly hunts the Ghost crew, nearly killing Kanan and Ezra Bridger, and wipes out a Rebel fleet. It's thrilling to hear James Earl Jones voice Vader in all his evil glory. It's also in this episode that Vader discovers that Ahsoka has survived the Jedi purge.

"Stealth Strike"

S2E9: This episode harkens back to the fun banter and adventure of the original *Star Wars* as the "odd couple" of Kanan and clone Captain Rex don stormtrooper disguises to rescue Ezra from an Imperial secret weapon (one borrowed from the Expanded Universe, no less).



"The Honorable Ones"

S2E17: Great performances by Steve Blum (Zeb) and David Oyelowo (Imperial Agent Kallus), who find themselves trapped on an ice moon and develop a measure of respect for each other as they work together to survive, with Kallus beginning a journey of redemption.

"Shroud of Darkness"

S2E18: High emotional stakes as Ezra, Kanan and Ahsoka enter the Jedi temple on Lothal, where Yoda (voiced by Frank Oz) points Ezra toward the planet Malachor. Kanan is officially dubbed a Jedi Knight and Ahsoka faces the reality that her former master has become Darth Vader.

"Twilight of the Apprentice"

S2E21: From the early days of *The Clone Wars* we wondered how the inevitable confrontation between Ahsoka Tano and Anakin Skywalker/Darth Vader would unfold, and I was lucky enough to play a part in working out this epic story.

"Trials of the Darksaber"

S3E15: Here we get a glimpse into lightsaber training while taking a dive into Sabine Wren's backstory. It's always risky to tell a story where the dramatic stakes are only psychological, but it pays off as Sabine finds catharsis and starts down a path of her own.

"Through Imperial Eyes"

S3E17: A twisty-turny suspense thriller, this was one of our most difficult stories to crack. It was a real challenge to keep everyone smart as Ezra and Kallus match wits with Grand Admiral Thrawn in a spy game in which both sides come away with a win.

"Twin Suns"

S3E20: The decision to not have Darth Vader kill Darth Maul as initially conceived in "Twilight of the Apprentice" turns out to have been wise, as it sets the stage for a much more meaningful rematch between Maul and Obi-Wan Kenobi on Tatooine.

Star Wars Rebels Seasons 1, 2 and 3 are available on Blu-ray from Buena Vista Home Entertainment.

Star Trek: Discovery Future's Past

BOLDLY GOING TO A SECOND SEASON

by Edward Gross

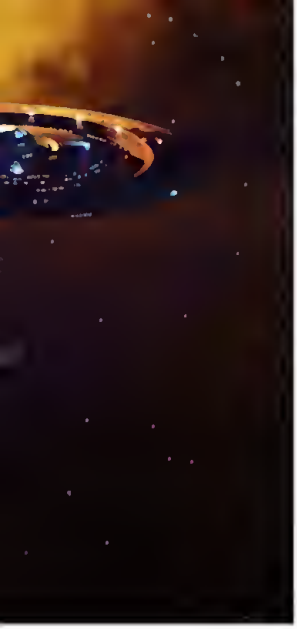
WHETHER YOU'VE FALLEN IN LOVE with the newest incarnation of the venerable *Star Trek* franchise or not, it is an unquestionable success in one regard: It put CBS' new streaming platform, CBS All Access, on the map. Although the strategy to make the new series available exclusively through the network's app was the subject of much derision from fans initially, from a business perspective, using the crown jewel of the CBS television library to launch its new online venture was a Dyson sphere-sized success.

As filming begins on season two with the surprise appearance of Captain Christopher Pike's U.S.S. Enterprise in the first season finale fresh in viewers' minds, the show's producers have cast the role of Pike with actor Anson Mount, late of the ill-fated *Marvel's Inhumans*, who we presume will actually utter dialogue in his role as Pike as opposed to his silent *Inhumans* role. Mount definitely looks the part, and the word from *Discovery*'s showrunners is that season two will explore more connections between *Discovery* and the original *Star Trek*, with at least one planet and plotline explored in both the original *Trek* and in the movies slated for a visit, as well as some explorations of religious themes.

For Jason Isaacs, (whose charismatic character, Captain Gabriel Lorca, was revealed to be an escapee from the dark, nihilistic Mirror Universe and then executed, eliminating him from the series), *Discovery*'s stylistic difference in approach was the allure. Certainly no stranger to on-screen villainy (perhaps you remember him as Lucius Malfoy in the *Harry Potter* films?), for Isaacs, the twists and turns of the character were fun to play.

"If I thought in any way I was being asked to retread the paths that were taken so brilliantly by all the people who'd done it before, I just would have said no," he offers with a shrug. "There wouldn't have been a challenge otherwise. I had no interest in being compared to the people or the iconic performances I kind of worshipped when I was a kid. I'm *not* a fan of reboots or retreads or remakes, and only when they persuaded me that this was an entirely new story — and really born off of our times and for our times — was I interested in doing it."

CONFERENCE CALL: Saru and Burnham (left) talk strategy with Captain Lorca (right).



DISCOVER THE CONNECTIONS

YOUR *STAR TREK: DISCOVERY* SEASON 1 EPISODE GUIDE AND MYTHOLOGY PRIMER. **by Jeff Bond**

Beyond Klingon wars and sojourns to the Mirror Universe, one of the things that the creators and stars of *Discovery* have attempted to do is use the show to hold up a mirror to modern society in the grand *Star Trek* tradition, focusing on concepts of both diversity and division simultaneously, showing its people trying to embrace the former and do away with the latter.

Executive producer Akiva Goldsman (*Batman & Robin*) notes that the original *Star Trek* was "extraordinarily relevant" in that incarnation. "It was at a time," he says, "when we needed narrative objects that showed the *possibility* of inclusion and a change. Something that was fundamentally optimistic. The world needs hope as much now as it did then, if not more so, so *Star Trek* harkens back to what it was in the late '60s, which is not to suggest that the interstitial series were not relevant. They were. They were products of their time, but what a complicated time we live in right now, so therefore the needs for objects that offer a better view of the future may be more acute."

"Hopefully, this show does what entertainment should do, and that's make us think and make us inquire about what our possibilities are," muses Doug Jones,

THE VULCAN HELLO

Burnham's backstory as a human raised by Vulcans gets off to a lavish but shaky start as the series establishes the crew of the U.S.S. Shinzou.
Connections: Compare *Discovery*'s Klingons with the Worf-centered Klingon arcs on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* ("The Sins of the Father," etc.).

BATTLE AT THE BINARY STARS

Burnham's final status as an emotionally broken, notorious mutineer is a great set-up for the character, although the Shinzou episodes as a whole don't quite grip the way they should.
Connections: The original *Star Trek*'s "Journey to Babel," the animated series' "Yesteryear" and even J.J. Abrams' 2009 *Star Trek* will get you up to speed on Burnham's (and Spock's) father Sarek (played by James Frey on *Discovery*).

CONTEXT IS FOR KINGS

Thanks to a scary tardigrade creature and a superb supporting cast led by Jason Isaacs as Captain Lorca, the first episode on the Discovery is a major step above the Shinzou outings.
Connections: The Discovery's secret military status suggests the skullduggery of Section 31 in episodes like *Enterprise*'s "Terra Prime."

THE BUTCHER'S KNIFE CARES NOT FOR THE LAMB'S CRY

Burnham's efforts at understanding the alien tardigrade creature recall the best of the franchise.
Connections: *TOS*'s "The Devil in the Dark" is the baseline for finding the sympathetic motives behind a seemingly frightening alien monster.

CHOOSE YOUR PAIN

Rainn Wilson's Harry Mudd and some disturbing intrigue involving Klingon prisoner Ash Tyler propel this offbeat episode set on a Klingon prison outpost.
Connections: *TOS*'s "Mudd's Women" and "I, Mudd" will give you the lowdown on irascible con-man Harry Mudd and his wife Stella.

LETHE

Burnham's upbringing on Vulcan and Lorca's hidden motivations take center stage as Burnham uses a mind meld to rescue a stranded Sarek.
Connections: "Journey to Babel" is another touchstone here as well as other Vulcan-centric episodes like *TNG*'s "Sarek" and *Enterprise*'s "Home" and "Awakening."

MAGIC TO MAKE THE SANEST MAN GO MAD

An exhilaratingly paced romp with Burnham and Tyler working out an ingenious way of stopping Harry Mudd's plan to keep the *Discovery* crew in a time loop.
Connections: *TNG*'s "Time Squared" and "Cause and Effect" are obvious influences.

SI VIS PACEM, PARA BELLUM

Doug Jones' antelope-like alien Saru takes center stage in an episode that's visually lavish but frustratingly derivative.
Connections: With its Klingons about to invade a planet of peaceful but superior aliens, this episode owes a huge debt to *TOS*'s "Errand of Mercy," but seems much less sure of what it's trying to say.

INTO THE FOREST I GO

While the story beats are often maddening here, director Chris Byrne raises everyone's game with a visual tour de force featuring a thrilling space battle and a positively Kirk-like Burnham taking on the Klingon leader hand-to-hand.
Connections: The ship infiltration plot recalls *TOS*'s "The Enterprise Incident," except that Burnham and Tyler forget to disguise themselves as Klingons.

DESPITE YOURSELF

A Mirror Universe episode that ends with a great turn when Burnham is attacked by the jealous captain of her old ship, the Shinzou, and quickly winds up captain by assassination herself.
Connections: Check out the original *TOS* "Mirror, Mirror" as well as *Enterprise*'s "In a Mirror, Darkly" for background to the Mirror Universe.

Continued from pg. 31

THE WOLF INSIDE

Sleeper agent Tyler being driven over the edge by the sight of Klingon leader Voq preaching peace reduces some of the disappointment of Tyler's long-telegraphed secret identity.
Connections: For the original Klingon-disguised-as-a-human plot, check out *TOS*'s "The Trouble With Tribbles."

VAULTING AMBITION

Lorca's got his own secret identity — he's been from the Mirror Universe all along.
Connections: But what of Lazarus? *TOS*'s "The Alternative Factor" has nothing on this episode's incoherence.

WHAT'S PAST IS PROLOGUE

Lorca gets his and Burnham gets Mirror Georgiou — but maybe not the way we thought she would.
Connections: The ramming speed finale is right out of *Star Trek: Insurrection*.

THE WAR WITHOUT, THE WAR WITHIN

Discovery's without a captain and Mirror Georgiou's going to help them win the Klingon war?
Connections: Burnham, Georgiou and Admiral Cornwell make this a celebration of estrogen in command — better check out *Star Trek: Voyager*.

AVAILABLE NOW

DVDS AND BLU-RAYS FROM CBS AND PARAMOUNT HOME VIDEO AT WALMART AND WALMART.COM

STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

STAR TREK: MOVIE TRILOGY

STAR TREK: VOYAGER

STAR TREK: THE ANIMATED SERIES

who plays Kelpien First Officer of *Discovery*, Saru — an early fan favorite. "Our world is in more turmoil now than I've ever remembered in my entire lifetime. In my 57 years on this planet, right now is the most upheaval with two sides being at odds with each other within our own borders. If you want to make current and world issue parallels with our show, you certainly can. But it presents it in a way that you can put into or get out of it whatever you wish as an audience member. It *does* give you hope for a peaceful future. Yes, we've been at battle and it's a bit dark. Our storylines and our conflicts can be dark on the show, but working through them and working them out and finding solutions and using intellect as opposed to emotional, knee-jerk reactions to solve things... Hopefully *that's* a way to educate while we entertain."

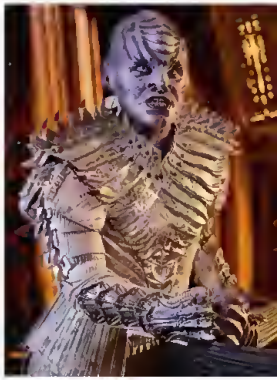
For Sonequa Martin-Green, a veteran of *The Walking Dead*, whose breakout performance as mutineer Michael Burnham, *Star Trek*'s role in the world remains the same that it's always been: "It's sort of the iconography of universality, which you can see everywhere in our story. That's always been the case. We're surrounded by the problem right now everywhere we look — in the news, on our TV screens — so I feel to be able to tune in to something that shows you acceptance is important, because you have to see it first before you can do it. You have to have a vision of it before you can bring it to life. So while things are so divisive, and while things are so volatile right now, to see a group of people in the future that have been able to overcome so much that ails us today and to see those people continuing to strive to understand each other — to truly accept everyone for who they truly are — I hope that it will ignite more and more hope in people's hearts."

That *sounds* great, though one of the more problematic areas of the show is its setting a decade before the original series that introduced *Star Trek* to the world in the 1960s. And that has nothing to do with whether the sets, technology or costumes align themselves with that show, but rather that many of the characters in the first season have not proven themselves to be examples of the evolved beings who had been a part of that legendary TV show.

"I would suggest with all due respect, that's 20/20 hindsight," Goldsman counters. "If you really look into the potential conflicts that existed in the original episodes, it was a different world. There were assumptions that were endemic to the culture of the time that we would, today, consider provincial, biased. So in one sense we are more enlightened just because, culturally, as storytellers we get to tell more enlightened stories. The other truth is that, I suppose, the nature of complexity is that it's dark and light. I don't think you tell long-form stories, serialized stories, without complexity. I'm trying to think of the whimsical, long-form *Star Trek*. I'm not sure that's actually true to the original. We live in a different time and our characters are a product of our storytelling, which comes from a different moment than 1967, '68, '69. We're not going for gritty and we're not looking for dystopia. That certainly will not be the outcome of the series."

That outcome, according to executive producer Aaron Harberts, will ultimately be the world of the original *Star Trek*, which he

■ SLEEPER: Star-crossed lovers Ash Tyler (left) and Michael Burnham



■ PURPLE PEOPLE EATER: Klingon interrogator L'Rell (Mary Chieffo).

actually finds a relief when compared to a show that took place, say, a century past *Star Trek: Voyager*. For that, he's thankful to series co-creators Bryan Fuller and Alex Kurtzman.

"That would have been a quite terrifying breadth of time, in terms of the canvas," he admits. "I know the fans are excited at the prospect of something completely unseen and new. But I also feel that the choice to do this 10 years before did create a structure and a sort of comfort level for the writers, because we knew we already had certain things built in. We knew how far we could go. We knew what we *couldn't* do. Really, our job was to dig in on what our shift was and what makes *Discovery* special. And, more importantly, for our characters it just gave us the freedom to not have to worry a lot about brand new world creation.

"So the challenge," he continues, "is that it's definitely wrestling what things you want to do to the ground. And that's the benefit of where we are right now: focusing on our crew and our ship set within the timeline that has been pretty well-documented. In terms of where the series *Enterprise* ends and *The Original Series* begins. Before we have a reckoning that is *TOS*, we get to have fun thinking about, 'How do we twist and turn and fold this so that it *does* sync with canon?' With every season that happens, we're driving straight at that wall, which I actually think is pretty cool and exciting."

INGLORIOUS TREKKER

by Mitch Rubenstein

TARANTINO TAKES HIS SHAT AT PULP SCIENCE FICTION

AFTER JUSTIN LIN'S *STAR TREK BEYOND* UNDERPERFORMED at the box-office, some thought the *Trek* franchise on the big screen had run out of dilithium crystals. But that all changed when it was announced that auteur director Quentin Tarantino would helm the next installment of *Star Trek* after completing work on his new film about the Manson Family murders. In the interim, it was announced *The Revenant* writer Mark L. Smith would begin work on the screenplay.

What may seem an unlikely choice isn't as strange as it seems given Tarantino's professed love for *Star Trek* — and particularly William Shatner. Says writer-producer (and *Geek* editorial consultant) Mark A. Altman, "Quentin is a huge *Trek* fan and particularly a Shatner obsessive. When we screened our film *Free Enterprise*, starring Shatner at the Hawaii Film Festival, we literally talked about Bill and *Trek* for hours with Tarantino following the screening. So, yes, he's a big fan."

While the film is still years away from seeing the light of a projector bulb, one thing is for sure, this will certainly be a *Star Trek* film unlike any other. Already announced as potentially R-rated, other *Trek* actors have been clamoring to get a piece of the action, including Patrick Stewart. Whether Tarantino utilizes the current cast or creates an epic crossover between multiple casts — which is what fans have been salivating for — won't be clear for at least another year or two when pre-production will hopefully begin.

■ THE QUENTIN TARANTINO FILM COLLECTION IS AVAILABLE ON DVD, BLU-RAY AND DIGITALLY ON VUDU.

SPIELBERG SCI-FI LIST

WITH *READY PLAYER ONE* DUE ON BLU-RAY IN JULY AND *JURASSIC WORLD* HITTING THEATERS, TIME TO CHECK OUT THE LEGENDARY DIRECTOR'S OUTPUT ON DISC

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND
SONY
Spielberg's first foray into science fiction remains one of the most visually dazzling movies ever made, thanks to the director's trademark sense of wonder, Vilmos Zsigmond's vivid cinematography and Douglas Trumbull's groundbreaking visual effects. The 4K release is the perfect demo disc for any UltraHD entertainment system, from the bass rumble of the arriving alien mothership to the movie's dazzling color scheme and inky black night scenes.

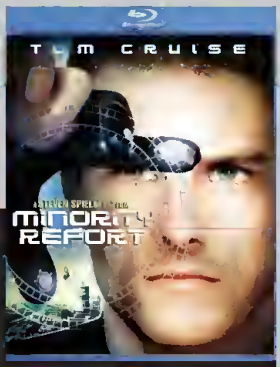
E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL
UNIVERSAL

This three hanky adventure about the friendship between a young boy and a waddling alien became one of Spielberg's biggest hits and is still guaranteed to grab your kids' attention and probably reduce you to a tear-drenched mess yourself 36 years after its 1982 release. The 4K anniversary edition includes updated visual effects, deleted scenes and other special features.

JURASSIC PARK COLLECTION
UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME ENTERTAINMENT

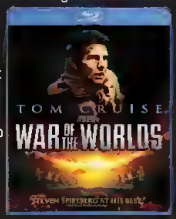
Spielberg and visual effects supervisors Dennis Muren and Phil Tippett forever changed the art of special effects and the depictions of dinosaurs on film with this adaptation of Michael Crichton's novel that showed that Spielberg's majesty over visual choreography and visceral terror hadn't ebbed a bit since 1975's *Jaws*. *Jurassic Park*'s biggest moment will probably never be equaled: when Sam Neill, Jeff Goldblum and Laura Dern gaze in dumbstruck awe at a brachiosaurus early in the movie. In 1993, audiences were having the same reaction as they witnessed photorealistic, seemingly living dinosaurs. Spielberg's follow-up to the original dino-park movie, like Crichton's sequel novel, is more complex but ultimately can't match the impact of the first film, but it still sports some knockout sequences, including a dinosaur stampede, an attack by two T-Rexes on a semi truck overhanging a cliff and a T-Rex rampage in San Diego.

A.I.: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
WARNER BROS.
Probably Spielberg's most underrated and difficult-to-appreciate film, this realization of a project begun by Stanley Kubrick shifts fascinatingly (or uncomfortably, depending on your POV) between Spielberg's instinctive warmth and Kubrick's unsentimental coldness in a movie that shows artificial life forms inheriting the earth from an undeserving humanity as mankind goes extinct.



MINORITY REPORT
DREAMWORKS HOME ENTERTAINMENT
Made shortly after *A.I.*, this dystopian fable based on a Philip K. Dick story features Tom Cruise as a future cop whose job is to arrest felons before they commit the crimes predicted by a cabal of psychics — but as usually happens to world weary P.I.s, Cruise's character soon winds up on the run himself. Spielberg's cinematographer Janusz Kaminski gives this future a color-bleached, bitter cold look in keeping with the dark storyline.

WAR OF THE WORLDS
DREAMWORKS HOME ENTERTAINMENT
This chilling adaptation of the H.G. Wells novel is more faithful than the 1953 George Pal version, right down to the towering tripod war machines, the red weed and lead Tom Cruise's odyssey in a basement with an unhinged Tim Robbins. It's a test case for people who can't abide Tom Cruise, but he's terrific as a selfish single father forced to defend his two kids from the alien invaders. And Spielberg pulls off some of the most white-knuckle, hair-raising sequences of his career in a movie that sports sound effects that will test your home entertainment audio system.



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ALICIA VIKANDER: TOMBRA

by Edward Gross

AVAILABLE IN JUNE

THE FINAL STAGE OF REBOOTING LARA CROFT, the Tomb Raider, which began with the video game back in 2013, hit theaters in March with a new film starring Oscar winner Alicia Vikander in the title role. *Tomb Raider* is now headed to Blu-ray and 4K where its visual pleasures can be appreciated on your TV.

In the film, Lara, attempting to solve the mystery of her father's disappearance, sets off to his last known location: a mythical island that lies off the coast of Japan, and serves as the home for a tomb that could hold all her answers. There's lots of action and adventure along the way, which works out well for Vikander: This project allows her to achieve her personal goal of starring in a Hollywood action blockbuster. And that's for someone who has already achieved a lot.

Born in 1988 in Sweden, Vikander is a former dancer who pursued acting as a child. It began paying off when she starred in the TV drama *Andra Avenyn* and then, two years later, made her feature film debut in *Pure*. *Ex Machina* (2014) raised her profile yet more and *The Danish Girl* (2015) saw her win the Academy Award for best supporting actress. Despite these successes, *Tomb Raider* should elevate her to a whole new level.

GEEK: What drew you to *Tomb Raider?* What was it that made you say, "I must do this"?
ALICIA VIKANDER: First of all, I love film. I have a mother who's a stage actress who, as I grew up, introduced me to film and a lot of European art house movies from a young age. So I've always loved going to the cinema. I think adventure films were maybe my favorite genre. I saw *Indiana Jones* I don't know how many times. I loved *The Mummy* series when I was growing up, and the "Tomb Raider" game. I have a personal experience of being, I don't know, between 10, 11, 12 when I walked in my dad's friend's living room and they had a PlayStation, which I didn't have in my house. They were playing the "Tomb Raider" game, which was the first time I'd ever seen a female

protagonist being a heroine. When I was approached to make this film, I was already familiar with the character.

Maybe another layer is because I used to dance until I was 19, and with these kind of big adventure spectacle films and action films I've always wondered what it's like to be in one of them and use that kind of movement. This allowed me to be able to step into one of those big films.

GEEK: How did the reality compare to your fantasy?
ALICIA VIKANDER: How you approach a role like this as an artist and as a filmmaker is the same in essence. The passion and the preparation work, and a lot of wanting to create an in-depth and multi-leveled character, is the same, but the amount of people involved, I guess, is the huge difference. You go from maybe 60 people to 350, which is one of the things that gives the feeling it's such a huge machinery and that you're really creating another world. Everything was kind of built sets; we didn't have that much green-screen, which I thought was extremely thrilling. But the biggest challenge is to create films that have artistic depth and value and still are able to become the big adventure and rides that they're supposed to be.

GEEK: Was there much you could take away from the video game to help play the character?
ALICIA VIKANDER: Definitely. When I was called up and asked if I would be interested to be a part of this project, the first thing I thought was, "Angelina Jolie kind of made her into an icon because of the films that were made." And then I was told that this film was going to be based on the rebooted game from 2013. This, of course, made me go and buy the games and immerse myself in that universe, Lara still has the same traits: She's intelligent, witty, she has this incredible ability of always seeing things from the good side. She falls over and she always gets back up. I understand why the video game company rebooted the game's view of women — how it's really changed. If you would go up to any young man or woman on the street, the definition of badass action hero is defined very differently nowadays compared to 20 years ago when she first came out. So I love the fact that it was much more of an origin story and that you're getting this real girl who has those famous traits, but also has a vulnerability and is a young person trying to find her place in the world and understand her path. This is the story of her becoming the very loved action hero that she's so well known to be.

GEEK: Is the timing for the film fortuitous in the sense of everything that's been going on with women being put in a more powerful position?
ALICIA VIKANDER: Let's just hope that this is not a coincidence. Over the last few years, there has been a change happening. The last few months have been a catalyst, a ripple effect that has been extremely powerful and that's been wonderful to see. But, of course, when I started doing English-speaking films, I was just attracted to something like *Hunger Games* — to not only see a single main character in one of those big franchise movies, but also to prove that it's commercially successful. Same thing with *Wonder Woman*, which I thought was wonderful. And I really do think that there's a time now when all these stories finally have a light shining upon them and are getting a chance to be told.

GEEK: Have you gotten the reaction from people, "She's an Academy Award winner and she's doing *Tomb Raider?*"
ALICIA VIKANDER: I think people kind of did, but for me I loved these films and I've always loved them, and to be given the chance to be part of making one has been extremely wonderful. We kind of step into the cinema to leave the world behind and kind of immerse yourself in an adventure. To get the chance to do that is amazing. I've always loved playing characters of different genres that have been very different from anything I've just done before. My friends know that I've always said, "Oh, my God, to get the chance to play an action hero would be frigging amazing."

GEEK: What was the physical aspect of this film like for you?
ALICIA VIKANDER: It's kind of a gift when someone tells you, "Your full-time job for the next four months is going to be immersing yourself in everything from MMA training to bicycling to climbing." I really wanted to change my body for this, because it's put within the story that she's a girl who trains in MMA; she's a bicycle courier; she's a physical being. When she actually ends up on this assignment and she has to become the survivor, you will find it plausible that she would have the strength to find the tools that she probably has within her to conquer and survive.

TOP TOMB RAIDER GAMES

RANKING LARA CROFT'S BEST RELIC-HUNTING ROMPS

by Matt Cabral

FOLLOWING ITS BLOCKBUSTER DEBUT IN 1996, the *Tomb Raider* series spawned more sequels, spin-offs and remakes than you could shake a pair of silver-plated pistols at. While many entries were little more than coattail-riding cash-ins or formulaic rehashes, a select number of Croft's adventures stood out as modern-day classics. Whether you're a rookie looking to raid your first tomb or a seasoned spelunker revisiting the series, here are the five games you should start with.

5. LARA CROFT GO

(2015)

A *Tomb Raider* game you can tackle on your smartphone, *Lara Croft GO* forgoes much of the action and acrobatics of the dedicated console entries for a smart, strategy-focused take on the franchise. A killer combination of addictive, turn-based, puzzle-solving, enemy- and trap-riddled environments, and a stylized visual presentation, *GO's* perfect for, well, tomb-raiding on-the-go.

4. TOMB RAIDER: ANNIVERSARY

(2007)

It's tempting to include the title that started it all — or its superior sequel — on any best of list, but as great as those entries were two decades ago, they now look more ancient than Croft's recovered artifacts. Instead, we suggest forgoing the nostalgia in favor of this excellent remake of Croft's debut. Borrowing the best graphical- and gameplay-enhancing elements from 2006's *Tomb Raider: Legend*, *Anniversary* is a from-the-ground-up re-imagining that lets fans enjoy Croft's first adventure without having to don rose-tinted glasses.

3. TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

(2006)

After hitting its lowest point with 2003's abysmal *Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness*, the series bounced back to greatness with *Legend*. Sporting a clever story, gorgeous visuals, engaging gameplay and immersion-ratcheting effects, the defining entry not only redeemed the franchise and its relic-hunting heroine, but also cemented studio Crystal Dynamics as the series' go-to developer.

2. TOMB RAIDER

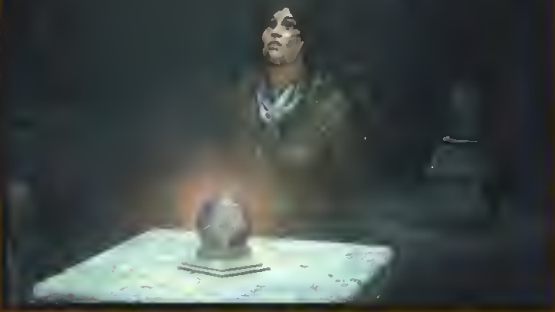
(2013)

A complete brand overhaul, 2013's *Tomb Raider* doesn't just retell Croft's origin tale, but re-imagines the iconic adventurer as a much more realistic, relatable character. Shelving the pistol-packing heroics and unrealistic physical proportions that put Croft on the map, this reboot follows her emotional path from scared girl to powerful survivor. An engrossing story, eye-popping visuals and intuitive, survival-focused gameplay round out the experience.

1. RISE OF THE TOMB RAIDER

(2016)

A sequel to Crystal Dynamics' groundbreaking reboot, *Rise of the Tomb Raider* doubled down on everything that put its predecessor in the same league as Nathan Drake's *Uncharted* exploits. On top of polishing the visual presentation and perfecting the gameplay, the followup nailed the sweet spot between absorbing storytelling and set-piece-driven action. Best of all, because the previous game had tackled Croft's origin story, *Rise* was free to let her — and her fans — do what she does best: raid tombs.



by Matt Cabral

JURASSIC WORLD EVOLUTION TAKES A DINO-SIZED BITE OUT OF THE SIMULATION GENRE

Run Your Own Prehistoric Park

YOU COULD BE FORGIVEN r e ecting a video game based on the *Jurassic Park* and *Jurassic World* films to be an action-focused affair, complete with a muscle-bound protagonist filling rampaging Velociraptors full of buckshot. Frontier Developments' interactive adaptation of the popular franchise, however, is forgoing the expected genre tropes in favor of a riskier, but arguably more interesting approach to dino-wrangling.

The studio's upcoming *Jurassic World Evolution* is a simulation, but unlike similar games that see players building and managing cities or running the family farm, its take tasks fans with overseeing

Jurassic World Evolution

their own dinosaur theme park. The concept isn't entirely new, as mobile apps like *Jurassic Park Builder* have previously allowed players to harness their inner John Hammond, but *Evolution* aims to leverage the power of current-gen consoles to offer a significantly deeper and prettier experience.

Unfolding on Isla Nublar and its surrounding islands, the game will give gamers the chance to succeed where the movies' characters had failed, constructing and managing a dino-filled theme park that doesn't end up a total disaster. They'll bioengineer new dinosaur breeds, build facilities — from attractions to containment and research structures — attract tourists and rake in profits.

Beyond the core fantasy of letting fans build and run their own park, the game will attempt to keep them on their toes with a promising risk-reward dynamic. Balancing the needs of three separate entities — science, security and entertainment — players will need to complete various contracts for each to ensure everything runs smoothly and no one, errr, gets eaten.

This could mean creating a complete genome for a specific dinosaur breed for the science branch or maybe upgrading containment areas to keep security happy. Of course, with finite resources, it will be impossible to cover all your bases all the time; favor one path over another and your main attractions could end up feasting on your guests.

Dynamic disaster scenarios add another wrinkle, tossing a monkey — or raptor — into your park when things are otherwise running according to plan. The arrival of a tropical storm, for example, could see a severely damaged infrastructure compromise containment, leading to your T-Rex freely roaming around the food court. How you manage these potentially business-bankrupting scenarios is what can set your park apart from the films' failed enterprises.

Raising dinosaurs, from babies to big bads, is made even more engaging by *Evolution*'s polished visual presentation and intuitive gameplay. Highly detailed environments and creatures look like the real deal, while the clean, straightforward user interface elements ensure the potentially complex simulation is accessible to even rookie theme park entrepreneurs.

We look forward to welcoming guests — and hopefully keeping them safe — when *Jurassic World Evolution* swings open its massive gates this summer.

LIFE FINDS A WAY: Dinosaurs rule in *Jurassic World Evolution*.

by Matt Cabral

Six More to Watch in 2018

GOD OF WAR

(APRIL 20)

Despite sharing the same name as Kratos' 2005 PlayStation 2 debut, the new *God of War* is not a reboot or re-imagining but a proper sequel. That said, this follow-up is a far cry from the perturbed protagonist's previous deity-destroying adventures. Older, bearded and bringing up a young son, Kratos has forgone decapitating Greek mythology-inspired monsters in favor of sharpening his axe on the skulls of beasts torn from the pages of Norse lore. This fresh source of inspiration also informs the game's stunning environments and cinema-rivaling narrative.

RED DEAD REDEMPTION 2

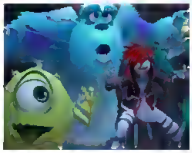
(OCTOBER 26)

You needn't look further than, well, any "top 10 video games" list to discover that *Red Dead Redemption* is one of the most beloved titles of all time. While that puts a bit of pressure on the open-world Western's successor, it seems Rockstar Games' highly ambitious sequel is up to the task. Sporting a beautiful, immersion-ratcheting world, cinematic six-gun-slinging action and play spaces designed to please online posses and lone gunmen alike, you can plan on getting lost in this epic until the cows come home.

SPIDER-MAN

(SEPTEMBER 7)

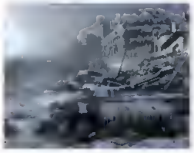
We were already sold on Spider-Man's next interactive adventure based on being built by the revered studio behind the *Ratchet & Clank* series. But after seeing it in action, we can confirm it offers much more than pretty spandex and a promising pedigree. Possibly the most eye-pleasing presentations to grace the PS4, this original tale puts players in control of a seasoned, crime-fighting Spidey. For fans, this means less time slogging through an origin story and more time spent spinning webs, combating criminals and using New York City as their personal playground.



KINGDOM HEARTS III

(TBA 2018)

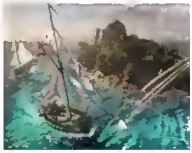
Square Enix's popular series has mashed up fan-favorite *Final Fantasy* and Disney characters in more spin-offs, side stories, sorta sequels and remakes than you can shake a Keyblade at. But the feverishly anticipated *Kingdom Hearts III* represents the franchise's first mainline sequel in over a decade. Fortunately, the wait should be worth it, as the next entry not only rejoins protagonist Sora with Mickey, Donald and Goofy, but also introduces new worlds based on *Monsters Inc.* and *Toy Story*.



METRO: EXODUS

(TBA 2018)

Metro 2033 and *Metro: Last Light* are some of the best — albeit underrated — story-driven shooters of the past generation. Trilogy-capper *Exodus* aims to build on its predecessors' brilliant blend of horror, survival and action by bringing players out of the relative safety of Moscow's subway system and into the stunningly realized post-apocalyptic, monster-infested world above. The more open environments also give way to non-linear levels, branching objectives, deep exploration and the necessity of relying on your surroundings to survive.



SKULL & BONES

(TBA 2018)

Ubisoft's Singapore studio has co-developed a number of the publisher's best games, but its greatest contribution may be the excellent naval battles from the pirate-themed *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*. With its ambitious *Skull & Bones*, the team now has the opportunity to fully flesh out its high seas-conquering ideas with a game dedicated to strategic, cannonball-blasting combat. Stunning visuals, deep, yet accessible gameplay and multiple modes for online competitors and solo commanders alike should make this one worth walking the plank for.

by Matt Cabral

Cry Havoc

IF YOU HAVEN'T CHECKED OUT *FAR CRY 5* YET HERE'S WHAT YOU'RE MISSING

FANS OF *FAR CRY 3* AND ITS SEQUEL faced some of the medium's best bad guys, Vaas and Pagan Min, respectively. Crazed, charismatic and compelling, the pair of antagonists significantly raised the bar for video game villainy. While we absolutely loved hating these two, however, we were left wanting, as both baddies were underused and supported by barely-there stories.

Far Cry 5 aims to fix this issue by not only doubling down on unsavory characters, but also delivering a narrative that never lets you forget them, even when they're not on screen. The ambitious, fifth mainline entry in Ubisoft's open-world action franchise introduces lots of new features as well, from in-game characters you can recruit to fight by your side to full campaign cooperative play, but the fresh focus on storytelling and character development is what stood out during the slice of game we dove into.

Far Cry 5 introduces Joseph Seed, a doomsday cult leader who's convinced he's been chosen to save the people of Hope County, Montana, whether they like it or not, from a coming apocalypse. Through fear-mongering, manipulation and violence, he's gathered a flock of followers — called The Project at Eden's Gate — who'd happily take a bullet for their "father." In fact, during the game's pulse-quickening opening moments, some do exactly that.

While watching a few fanatics lose their lives for Seed is chilling, it barely scratches the surface of the unsettling scares that unfold in the game's other first moments. We wouldn't dare spoil *Far Cry 5*'s cinematic opening — especially its gut-punch of a twist — but we will say witnessing Seed calmly sing "Amazing Grace" from the seat of a chopper going down in flames is just one of many moments that should fuel fans' nightmares.

Fast forward a few minutes past Seed's creepy serenade and players will find themselves in more familiar *Far Cry* territory: from the passenger's side of a speeding truck, they'll soon be flinging explosives out the window, blowing up bad guys behind them, and

generally leaving an impressive path of fiery destruction in their wake. While tons of fun, the car chase feels like a return to the previous games' pattern of beginning with a narrative bang, but quickly putting story on the back burner in favor of more literal "bangs."

As we soon discover, though, Seed, his faithful followers and the forceful way in which they push their extremist agenda are woven into every corner of *Far Cry 5*. As the game's rookie deputy protagonist, we regularly run into reminders of the cult's grasp, even while peacefully exploring the game's postcard-perfect Montana setting. A stroll into town reveals billboards with the words "sinner," "gluttony" and "greed" scrawled across them, while a walk in the woods is interrupted by the discovery of a hooded body strapped to a tree.

These disturbing inclusions are mere ambiance, though, subtle reminders of the severity of the situation that you may stumble upon while traversing the vast open-world. Seed's influence is more apparent during cinematic cutscenes, story missions and even optional side activities. Clearing enemy outposts in previous entries was a straightforward, mostly story-free affair involving shooting generic bad guys. In *FC5*, however, taking an outpost leaves no question as to whom you're taking it from and what the consequences might be.

During our demo, we were tasked with liberating an old lumber mill that's been occupied by Seed's fanatical followers. We know this not because we were told, but because the outpost is marked with the cult's symbols, propaganda and another hooded victim, this one dripping blood and swarmed by flies. There's also non-believers in cages, captors on their knees, hands bound behind their backs and unsettling messages playing over the PA system that preach of "culling the herd."

Upon liberating the lumber mill, we learn it's actually run by Seed's brother, Jacob, a soldier in charge of building the cult's army. Burly and bearded, Joseph's scary sibling recruits and trains those he sees potential in, while also sacrificing the weak. What might have been a simple, arbitrary outpost mission in a previous *Far Cry* entry turns into an absorbing, story-driven affair in *Far Cry 5*.

■ WELCOME TO THE CULT: Scenes from some of *Far Cry 5*'s startlingly realistic and often downright disturbing game play.

We're similarly impressed, and a bit terrified, by the game's ability to deliver narrative depth through interactions with supporting characters. When we walk through the mountains with Jess — a "gun for hire" who'll join your resistance — for example, she shares a chilling tale that makes her world seem like a place that existed long before we jumped into it. Her nightmare-conjuring account of a psychopath called The Cook also continues to set the stakes for what horrors are to come.

During our time in Seed's brainwashed world, we also learned of his sister, Faith, and brother, John, another pair of loons players will no doubt have to deal with. Where, again, previous series' entries have introduced a single antagonist, then downplayed their presence, *FC5* seems to be fleshing out a family of foes whose influence is felt throughout the game.

Amazingly, this welcome approach of putting characters and story first don't come at the cost of player freedom. Like previous franchise efforts, this one's gameplay feels most satisfying when dynamic moments emerge from creatively combining its various systems and mechanics. It's still very much the player's world to enjoy and get lost in, but there's also a meaty story to dig into for those looking to do more than toss dynamite from pick-up trucks.

Joseph Seed's disturbing presence is felt throughout the game, which may explain why *Far Cry 5* landed with such impact when it was released in late March. We'll see if his influence is finally cleansed from Hope County or whether that's a job for *Far Cry 6*.

by Matt Cabral

Assembling Intel on the Avengers Project

EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT SQUARE ENIX'S TOP-SECRET MARVEL GAME.

YOU'D HAVE BETTER LUCK FINDING ALL SIX Infinity Stones buried in your backyard than scoring any deep-diving details on Marvel and Square Enix's upcoming *Avengers*' game. Announced at the start of last year, the title — simply dubbed the "The Avengers Project" — is one of the most anticipated and closely guarded games in the interactive entertainment pipeline.

Still, the potential-packed project isn't a complete mystery. Developed by Square Enix studios Crystal Dynamics and Eidos-Montréal, who did bang-up jobs on their respective *Tomb Raider* and *Deus Ex* reboots, the game is officially described as: "a completely original story packed with all the characters, environments and iconic moments that have thrilled longtime fans of the franchise."

Also touted as featuring "a universe gamers can play in for years to come," the project was revealed alongside an enticingly cryptic teaser trailer. The short clip begins with a female narrator stating, "They say the time of heroes is over." This foreboding message is then followed by dismaying imagery of iconic *Avengers*' symbols, such as Captain America's shield and Thor's Mjolnir hammer, buried in the apparent aftermath of a brutal, superhero-crushing attack. Most disturbing, though, is the shot of Iron Man's lifeless arm, lying in the rubble, its Repulsor Beam barely flickering.

GIVE STARK A HAND: Iron Man hand tech is just one of the nifty details in "The Avengers Project."

Of course, it's not all doom and gloom, as the brief teaser concludes with the hashtag "#REASSEMBLE," suggesting that the characters will reform to kick epic amounts of backside. Perhaps the most exciting news is that industry vet Shaun Escayg will be the one getting the spandex-clad band back together. The former Naughty Dog developer — who previously pleased fans and critics alike with his work on the *Uncharted* and *The Last of Us* series — will serve as *The Avengers Project*'s creative director. The team also includes top talent from revered studios Visceral Games, Monolith and Sledgehammer Games.

Between the promising pedigree and the infinite narrative potential of the Marvel universe, it's looking like fans will want to reassemble for this one when it lands like a pavement-buckling Hulk smash, hopefully later this year.

MARVEL STRIKE FORCE BRINGS THE FIGHT TO MOBILE DEVICES

SQUARE ENIX'S TOP-SECRET Marvel project might be receiving all the buzz, but it's not the only upcoming game assembling an impressive roster of iconic superheroes. *Marvel Strike Force*, a new mobile entry from FoxNext Games, will see fans joining forces with Nick Fury to put together a team of Marvel's most famous day-savers and do-gooders. Upon recruiting squads, including the likes of Spider-Man, Captain America, Daredevil, Gamora, Star-Lord and Dr. Strange, players will battle it out against an equally legendary lineup of Marvel supervillains.

Featuring strategy focused combat, deep role-playing elements and an eye-popping visual presentation, *Marvel Strike Force* is shaping up to be our next on-the-go gaming addiction. Potentially saving Earth from an all-new enemy threat is just icing on the cake.

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CHALLENGE GOGGLES: VR gear for some serious Jedi training in *Star Wars: Jedi Challenges*.

by Matt Cabral

Geeky Gear

From a Galaxy Far, Far Away

A REAL LIGHTSABER (SORT OF) AND THE DROID YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.

STAR WARS: JEDI CHALLENGES

THE POWER OF THE FORCE and augmented reality collide in this lightsaber-swinging collaboration from Lenovo and Disney. Bundled with an AR headset, tracking beacon and peripheral that looks exactly like the elegant weapon wielded by Anakin, Luke and Rey, the platform lets fans clash virtual blades with Dark Side baddies in the comfort of their homes.

With a compatible smartphone — running the *Jedi Challenges*™ app — snapped into the goggles, players can deflect Stormtrooper blasts, reduce battle droids to piles of scrap and cut down Kylo Ren. Fantastic details, such as the sci-fi saga's familiar score and sound effects, as well as the sparks that erupt when the AR blade is dragged across your real-world floor, intensify the immersion.

When not duelling detailed holograms of Darth Vader, The Seventh Sister and other Sith foes, players can use the controller to command tiny units in a real-time strategy game. Set on five different planets — Naboo, Garel, Lothal, Hoth and Takodana — the tactical skirmishes turn your

living room floor into a sprawling, augmented reality battlefield, complete with familiar characters, vehicles, starships and even a tiny Tauntaun-riding Han Solo.

Along with the dedicated lightsaber duels and strategy-focused battles, each planet hosts Holochess matches. Based on the game played between Chewbacca and R2-D2, that famously prompted C-3PO to warn, "Let the Wookiee win," the AR version sees miniature monsters duke it out on a chess-like board.

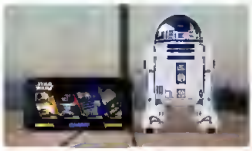
Jedi Challenges™ trio of games offer something for *Star Wars* fans of all stripes, but its coolest feature is the fact that it's an evolving platform. While its packed with plenty of content, Disney plans on continuously updating it with fresh challenges. A recent, free update based on *The Last Jedi*, for example, adds a new lightsaber duel against a pair of Praetorian Guards, as well as an island of Porgs to play with.

While you can't use *Jedi Challenges*™ AR-powered weapon to cut a grilled cheese in half, it's currently the closest you'll come to brandishing a real-life lightsaber.

R2-D2 APP-ENABLED DROID

BUILDING ON THE POPULARITY of its BB-8 app-enabled droid, Sphero has added R2-D2 to its lineup of controllable astromech companions. Featuring details ripped right from the films, the miniature R2 unit sports flashing LED lights, a spinning head, retractable third limb and all the emotive "bleeps" and "bloops" you'd expect from the galaxy's most famous droid.

Fans can command the bot's movements via their smartphones, but this sophisticated connected device is much more than a remote-controlled "toy." R2 can follow any path drawn on your screen's surface, take you on an augmented reality tour of the Millennium Falcon, interact with other Sphero droids and even perform signature animations, like excitedly rocking back and forth. View a *Star Wars* film with the iconic bot by your side, and it will even react to the on-screen action.



Whether you're looking for a droid companion or a new way to tease your cat, Sphero's R2-D2 does not disappoint.

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by Jeff Bond

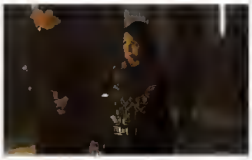
Is **Rekha Sharma's** Commander Landry the meanest Starfleet officer of all?

Mirror, Mirror

YOU'VE SEEN HER THROTTLED by a predator (In 2007's *Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem*) and blow Cally out of an airlock as secret Cylon Tory Foster in *Battlestar Galactica*. Rekha Sharma has been in new episodes of *The Outer Limits* and *The Twilight Zone*, James Cameron's *Dark Angel*, *Smallville* and the short-lived reboot of *V*, *Supernatural*, *The 100* and *Arrow* — but you might know her best as the ill-fated, tough-as-nails Commander Landry on *Star Trek: Discovery*. Landry appears at the beginning of the season in "Context Is for Kings" and "The Butcher's Knife Cares Not for the Lamb's Cry" before — spoiler alert! — she dies while getting a bit too aggressive with an alien tardigrade creature. But since *DSC* season 1 is all about the Mirror Universe, there's another Landry in waiting in the back half of the season — at least temporarily.

Sharma's entrance as Landry, the Discovery's security chief under mysterious Captain Gabriel Lorca (Jason Isaacs), made a big impression with fans as she dressed down mutineer Michael Burnham (series lead Sonequa Martin-Green) and her shipmates, addressing them as "garbage" — not exactly Starfleet protocol.

Sharma, a fan of both the original *Star Trek* and *Next Gen*, said she, too, was shocked by her dialogue in her opening scenes. "It felt like we were *Star Wars* instead of *Star Trek* — when I got the sides for the audition I thought, 'This is an Imperial officer; this is not a Starfleet commander.' And the sides were much worse — I had somebody face down in the mud with toxic waste and was laughing



about it and making them work harder, so, frankly, I was relieved that all I was saying was 'garbage' by the time we shot it."

Contrary to a brilliant fan theory cooked up by the author of this article, *Discovery's* Landry was never from the Mirror Universe herself, even though she's in tight with Lorca, whom we do learn is from the MU. "Because she became so loyal to Lorca, he really influenced her and she became Mirror-like in the Prime universe," Sharma explains. "It was that thing of 'be careful who you associate with.'"

Sharma says she loves the original *Star Trek's* vision of the struggle of flawed people in an ideal universe. "What I love about *Discovery* is I feel like it's going back to that difficulty and, honestly, I feel like Sonequa is Kirk, Spock and McCoy all rolled into one: We have the mind, the heart, the passion, the body, and she struggles with all of those things, and what I love about that is that's us — that's what we deal with as human beings, and it's really very much a hero's journey and what *Discovery* is about and watching her start the show from her absolute downfall."

Sharma's own personal struggle involves moving to Los Angeles from Vancouver and finding the perfect stereo system. "I have a gorgeous tube amplifier I'm getting an upgrade on right now. Ideally, I'd have a really good CD player — when I moved my CD player broke. The CD player into the tube amp definitely sounds better than streaming or MP3s. In an ideal world, I'd have a turntable but that's a whole investment because you have to buy a whole library of LPs."

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